

Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia Inc.

"Access to Education"



Digital Technology Hub — consultation paper

from the

Federal Council

of the

Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia Inc.

ICPA (Aust)

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The Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association of Australia, ICPA (Aust), appreciates the opportunity to comment on the design of the Digital Tech Hub. ICPA (Aust) welcomes the development of a dedicated Digital Technology Hub for all regional, rural and remote customers.

As an advocacy group representing geographically isolated students from early childhood to vocational and tertiary, any students whose educational opportunities and outcomes are impeded due to their geographical location, ICPA (Aust) believes that any technological support network needs to include support for those students who rely on technology for their education.

Provision of the curriculum in remote areas is largely dependent on access to the internet and telecommunications to access the curriculum provided by the educational centre, especially in distance education settings; connectivity is key. With this in mind, it is imperative that any platform set up with the purpose of providing information to support regional, rural and remote Australians in solving telecommunications issues and make the most of available technologies needs to consider ways of assisting those who use technology for educational purposes. It essential that the sources of information incorporated into the design of Digital Tech Hub includes include a knowledge base of the unique and variable situations in which technology is used to deliver education to rural and remote students.

To ensure that rural and remote students receive equitable educational opportunities in these areas, a key focus needs to be on maintaining adequate communications and technology to these students. As the curriculum and education system becomes more reliant on internet, this is even more essential.

To alleviate the barriers which affect both their ability to access technology, along with the limitations of the technology available to them and the ability to maintain the technology at the required level for them to access the education, telecommunications support services, including education and problem solving with technology issues and opportunities, in rural and remote Australia would be of huge benefit for all regional, rural and remote students and their families.

Question 1

What sources of information should be incorporated into the design of the Digital Tech Hub?

1. NBN
2. RSP’s although the hub must remain independent
3. Government
4. Better Internet for Rural, Regional and Remote The BIRRR website is very informative for regional, rural and remote users trying to get connected and stay connected, it is recommended that the DTH Provider work closely with BIRRR to further develop existing resources. BIRRR already has a vast understanding of RRR infrastructure and conditions. BIRRR is very much able to interpret “jargon” and assist regional, rural and remote consumers

with their requirements. The three main components that the hub should be very literate with in Regional Rural and Remote settings are

- a) How to get connected
- b) How to stay connected
- c) How to use a connection

Question 2

What other existing networks can be used to promote the Digital Tech Hub?

1. Isolated Children's Parents' Association (ICPA Aust)
2. Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN)
3. Regional Rural Remote Communications Coalition (RRRCC)
4. ABC Radio and TV
5. Field Days
6. Local Government
7. State and Federal MPs need to be aware of the hub and recommend it to constituents.
8. ICPA (Aust) recommends that the hub establishes a web chat facility that includes the ability for end users to upload/send pictures/photos and message with customer service personal that follow a case through from start to finish. This should be attached to the web page as not all users are on social media.
9. A Facebook page (not a group), which can access Messenger. Facebook page can be used to promote the DTH and Messenger can be used to 'chat' or forward people to the web chat facility.
10. Phone support is also essential

Question 3

What social media presence is most relevant to regional consumers?

ICPA (Aust) believes Facebook is the most widely used social media presence in RRR Australia.

Question 4

What 3 to 4 hour window would best suit a limited-hours phone service, if implemented?

This is a specific question that is very hard to answer. ICPA (Aust) would like to see a call service that operates during business hours that takes different time zones into account. If hours are to be limited a call back system would be preferential.

Question 5

For retail service providers: what kind of in-kind support can you provide for the Digital Tech Hub?

Not applicable for ICPA (Aust) to comment

Question 6

What information would be most useful to help small and medium businesses to maximise the benefits of digital connectivity?

Not applicable for ICPA (Aust) to comment

Question 7

What information would be most useful in assisting communities to undertake local digital planning?

- Types of internet available to locations
- Alternate (non nbn) fixed wireless services in their areas
- Mobile provider coverage maps
- Equipment that can be obtained through RSP's to help with connectivity, e.g. Telstra cell-fi - go

Question 8

What information would be most useful in assisting communities to prepare for, and best use digital connectivity during disaster and emergency situations?

- Back-up power supplies
- How to use Wi-Fi calling
- How to hotspot

Question 9

What options are there to fund the operation of the Digital Tech Hub beyond its two year funding period, e.g. paid advertising?

Paid Advertising (if appropriate)

TIO fines

RSP levy funds

NBN levy funds

ICPA believes that to keep in line with the reasoning that existing sources be utilised to save funds, the BETTER INTERNET FOR REGIONAL RURAL and REMOTE material and knowledge should be echoed by the hub. BIRRR has a proven record of understanding regional, rural and remote communication issues and resolving them. BIRRR has assisted ICPA members over and over.

ICPA (Aust) fully supports the creation of a Digital Tech Hub and our members have put forward motions calling for its establishment by government.